Unemployment rate rises to 4.3% in February

Media Release

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Source: Labour Force, Australia, February 2026

The seasonally adjusted unemployment rate increased to 4.3 per cent in February, according to the latest data from the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS).

Sean Crick, ABS head of labour statistics, said: 'The number of unemployed people grew by 35,000, contributing to the 0.2 percentage point increase of the unemployment rate in February.

'This month we saw fewer people who were unemployed and waiting to start a job in January move into employment in February, compared to recent Februarys.

'We also saw more people remaining unemployed this month compared to recent Februarys.'

Employed people grew by 49,000. Part-time employment rose by 79,000 people, while full-time employment fell by 30,000 people.

'This month we saw more people move into part-time employment, particularly those aged 65 and over,' Mr Crick said.

'Additionally, this month we saw that fewer people are leaving jobs to retire compared to a year ago.'

Hours worked fell 0.2 per cent this month, with more people working part-time hours instead of full-time hours.

The growth in both employment and unemployment has resulted in a 0.2 percentage point increase to the participation rate, which was 66.9 per cent in February.

Trend unemployment rate down to 4.2 per cent

'The trend unemployment rate fell marginally from a revised 4.3 per cent in January to 4.2 per cent in February,' Mr Crick said.

'Trend employment grew by 0.2 per cent while hours worked grew by 0.3 per cent in February. Annually, hours worked also grew faster than employment.'

Upcoming Labour Force modernisation

The ABS is modernising how it collects data in the Labour Force Survey, helping to publish high quality labour market statistics, while making it easier and more convenient for people to complete our surveys.

'The transition to our new system starts in April and when complete, it will give survey participants a modern, easy and secure way to complete the Labour Force Survey,' Mr Crick said.

'We are managing this transition with care to ensure our data remains accurate, trustworthy and secure.'

More information is available in the Modernising the Labour Force Survey (/media-centre/media-statements/modernising-labour-force-survey-april-2026) media statement.

We thank everyone who participated in and supported this survey.

Media notes

- The February survey reference period was from 1 February 2026 to 14 February 2026.
- The March survey reference period was from 1 March 2026 to 14 March 2026.
- Numbers may not be additive due to rounding.
- For any media requests, email media@abs.gov.au (mailto:media@abs.gov.au) or call 1300 175 070 (9am–5pm Canberra time) with your questions and deadline.
- If you would like to provide feedback or seek clarification on any of the Labour Force Modernisation changes, please email labour.statistics@abs.gov.au (mailto:labour.statistics@abs.gov.au) .
- Please attribute the 'Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS)' when using our data.
- Explore our Data Crash Course (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ie2K3PNejU4&list=PLR8_RxifMwL4JQTxYclMANzga67VBlyhj&index=11) for guidance on finding and interpreting ABS data, and subscribe to our release notifications (https://www4.abs.gov.au/ausstats/notifications.NSF/Web+Pages/ABS+Email+Notification+Service?OpenDocument) to stay updated.
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